

## Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:SREF

SUBJECT: INDOCHINESE REFUGEE BOAT CASES: APPROACHES TO  
COUNTRIES OF FIRST ASYLUM

1. SUMMARY. U.S. ATTORNEY GENERAL'S REFUGEE PAROLE  
ANNOUNCEMENT PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY FOR HIGH-LEVEL APPROACH  
SEEKING CONTINUED RTG HOSPITALITY FOR REFUGEES. REPORT  
REQUIRED PRIOR AUGUST 18. END SUMMARY.

2. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AUGUST 11 MADE A DETERMINATION TO  
PAROLE INTO THE UNITED STATES 15,000 INDOCHINESE, INCLUDING  
7000 BOAT CASE REFUGEES. HIS DETERMINATION SHOULD LIGHTEN  
REFUGEE PRESSURES IN COUNTRIES OF FIRST ASYLUM. IT PROVIDES  
THE BASIS FOR A RENEWED APPEAL TO EXTEND HOSPITALITY TO  
BOAT CASE REFUGEES.

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3. THE PRESIDENT, KEY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, THE PRESS, AND  
THE GENERAL PUBLIC HAVE EXPRESSED GRAVE CONCERN OVER THE  
PLIGHT OF THE BOAT CASE REFUGEES. ACCOUNTS OF EXTENSIVE  
SUFFERING AND LOSS OF LIFE REACHED A CRESCENDO IN JUNE  
AND JULY. THEY CENTERED ON SHIPS AT SEA THAT PASSED UP  
REFUGEES IN DISTRESS, AND ON COUNTRIES AROUND THE PERIPHERY  
OF THE SOUTH CHINA SEA THAT FORCED BOATS BACK OFFSHORE,

OR REFUSED TO ALLOW TO DEBARK IN THEIR PORTS THOSE REFUGEES THAT SHIPS HAD ALREADY RESCUED. THERE IS MUCH MORE

DOMESTIC CONCERN OVER THE ISSUE THAN DURING THE 1976 REQUEST FOR THE EXPANDED PAROLE PROGRAM.

4. SOME COUNTRIES OF TRADITIONAL IMMIGRATION ARE CONTINUING OR EXPANDING THEIR EFFORTS. FRANCE HAS AVERAGED ABOUT 1000 INDOCHINESE REFUGEES PER MONTH SINCE MAY 1975. AUSTRALIA HAS JUST ESTABLISHED A REFUGEE OFFICE IN BANGKOK. AUSTRALIA, IN ADDITION TO THE SOME 3000 INDOCHINESE REFUGEES IT HAS ALREADY TAKEN IN, PLANS TO ADMIT 150 PER MONTH FOR AT LEAST A YEAR STARTING IN SEPTEMBER 1977. NEW ZEALAND ANNOUNCED JULY 26 THAT IT WOULD SHORTLY ACCEPT UP TO 70 FAMILIES, OR SOME 420 INDIVIDUALS (REF B). CANADA, WHICH HAS ALREADY TAKEN IN SOME 7000, RECENTLY INFORMED THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES THAT IT WOULD ACCEPT 450 MORE. THE UNITED STATES, WHICH HAS ABOUT 146,000 IN COUNTRY, WILL TAKE 8000 FROM THAI CAMPS, IN ADDITION TO 7000 BOAT CASE REFUGEES.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: CHARGE SHOULD INFORM RTG AT HIGHEST APPROPRIATE LEVEL (PERHAPS BOTH FONMIN UPADIT AND INTERIOR MINISTER SAMAK) THAT NEW U.S. PAROLE PROGRAM REFLECTS IN LARGE PART OUR SPECIFIC RECOGNITION OF THE PROBLEMS POSED TO THAILAND BY REFUGEES AND OUR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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APPRECIATION OF THAI EFFORT. WE HOPE THAT THE U.S. PROGRAM (PLUS THOSE CONTINUING OR RECENTLY ANNOUNCED BY FRANCE, AUSTRALIA, CANADA, NEW ZEALAND, AND DENMARK, AS WELL AS OTHERS WHICH MAY FOLLOW U.S. LEAD) WILL REDUCE SOME OF THE REFUGEE PRESSURES FACED BY THE THAI, PARTICULARLY WHERE VIETNAMESE ARE CONCERNED. YOU MIGHT ALSO NOTE THAT THE RTG'S HUMANITARIAN APPROACH TO REFUGEES HAS MADE A VERY FAVORABLE IMPRESSION IN THE UNITED STATES AND INDICATE IN AN APPROPRIATE MANNER OUR CONFIDENCE IN CONTINUED RTG RESPECT FOR REFUGEES SEEKING ASYLUM. DURING YOUR TALKS, YOU SHOULD ALSO EXPRESS OUR BELIEF THAT IT IS IN RTG'S LONG-TERM INTEREST TO UNDERTAKE A RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM FOR REMAINING REFUGEES. THE USG IS WILLING TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE UNHCR AND RTG TOWARDS SOME FORM OF PERMANENT RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM FOR THOSE REFUGEES WHO REMAIN IN THAILAND. WE BELIEVE OTHER COUNTRIES COULD ALSO BE INTERESTED IN SUPPORTING RTG ENDEAVORS IN THIS FIELD, INCLUDING GENERAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT FOR AREA OF RESETTLEMENT WHICH WOULD BENEFIT THAI CITIZENS AS WELL AS REFUGEES. PLEASE REPORT BY AUGUST 18.

6. SIMILAR APPROACHES BEING MADE BY USG TO OTHER  
FIRST ASYLUM COUNTRIES AND CONCURRENT DEMARCHES REQUESTED  
OF AUSTRALIA, CANADA, DENMARK, FRANCE AND NEW ZEALAND. CHRISTOPHER

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## Message Attributes

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